IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented): A surgical sponge comprising:

   a) three substantially spherical radiopaque markers;

   b) said markers being closely grouped to one another;

   c) each of said markers having an x-ray density equivalent to at least about 0.1 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$; and

   d) said radiopaque markers being disposed in a relationship that is substantially fixed both in spacing and in orientation.

2. (previously presented): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, wherein each of said markers has an x-ray density equivalent to at least about 0.1 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$ for x-rays incident on said target in any direction.

3. (original): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, wherein said x-ray density is equivalent to at least about 0.2 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$.

4. (original): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 2, wherein said x-ray density is equivalent to at least about 0.2 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$.

5. (previously presented): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, wherein each of said markers has an area of at least 5 mm^2 in at least one projection.

6. (previously presented): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 5, wherein each of said markers has an area of at least 5 mm^2 in any projection.

7. (previously presented): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, wherein said three substantially spherical radiopaque markers produces an x-ray image having a distinctive, visually recognizable shape.

8. (canceled)

9. (canceled)

10. (canceled)

11. (original): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, further comprising a remotely detectable electronic article surveillance tag.

12. (cancelled)

13. (previously presented): A method of detecting a surgical sponge within a surgical patient, said surgical sponge comprising three substantially spherical radiopaque markers, said markers being closely grouped to one another, each of said markers having an x-ray density equivalent to at least about 0.1 g/cm^2 of $BaSO_4$, said radiopaque markers being disposed in a relationship that is substantially fixed both in spacing and in orientation, and said method comprising the steps of: (a) obtaining at least one x-ray of at least a portion of said patient likely to contain said radiopaque markers; and (b) examining said x-ray to detect and locate an image of said sponge.

14. (previously presented): A method of detecting a surgical sponge within a surgical patient and treating said surgical patient, said surgical sponge comprising three substantially spherical radiopaque markers, said markers being closely grouped to one another, each of said markers having an x-ray density equivalent to at least about 0.1 g/cm^2 of BaSO4, said radiopaque markers being disposed in a

relationship that is substantially fixed both in spacing and in orientation, and said method comprising the steps of: (a) obtaining at least one x-ray of at least a portion of said patient likely to contain said radiopaque markers; (b) examining said x-ray to detect and locate an image of said sponge; and (c) carrying out a surgical procedure to remove said sponge from said patient.

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

17. (new): A surgical sponge as recited by claim 1, wherein said three substantially spherical radiopaque markers are contiguous.

18. (new): A method of detecting a surgical sponge within a surgical patient as recited by claim 13, wherein said three substantially spherical radiopaque markers are contiguous.

19. (new): A method of detecting a surgical sponge within a surgical patient and treating said surgical patient as recited by claim 14, wherein said three substantially spherical radiopaque markers are contiguous.